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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DAR ES SALAAM 000888

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [TZ](#)

SUBJECT: It's Kikwete: the CCM Party Chooses a Presidential Candidate

Classified by Pol-Econ Chief Judy Buelow for reason 1.4(b)

REF: A) Dar es Salaam 855 B) Dar es Salaam 832, C) Dar es Salaam 732, D) Dar es Salaam 538 and previous

1. (C) Summary: By a lopsided vote, the ruling CCM party chose the Foreign Minister Jakaye Mrisho Kikwete as its candidate for President. While only the 1,800 delegates to the CCM party Congress actually voted in the final round, the general public appears enthusiastic about the party's choice, and about Kikwete himself. Kikwete has no significant opposition and is virtually guaranteed to win the Presidency in the general elections of October, 2005. Kikwete's election breaks with the tradition of alternating the Presidency between mainlanders and Zanzibaris. The Party nominated Vice President Shein, who hails from Zanzibar, to stay on as Kikwete's running mate. Charismatic and articulate, Kikwete is thought to be particularly popular among young people, but administration is not his strong suit. End Summary.

. . . and Then There was One

2. (U) The top echelons of the CCM party converged on the remote capital of Dodoma for a week of nominating sessions. On May 2, the 36-member Central Committee convened to choose five of the eleven declared presidential candidates to proceed to the next round: Kikwete, Prime Minister Sumaye, Nyerere Foundation President Salim Salim, Planning and Privatization Minister Kigoda, and Transportation Minister Mwandosya. On the following day, the 200 members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) selected three finalists, eliminating Sumaye and Kigoda. Finally, on May 4, an Extraordinary Congress of the CCM, nearly 1,800 members strong, elected Kikwete.

3. (U) Most CCM-watchers viewed Kikwete as the front runner. Some factions in the party were nonetheless set against a Kikwete presidency. Kikwete's high "negatives" among the CCM leadership fueled speculation that the Party Congress would deadlock and eventually settle for a compromise candidate. (This was the scenario in 1995, when Kikwete garnered the most votes in the first round, but lost the Presidency to "dark horse" Benjamin Mkapa.) In the 2005 nomination, Kikwete won easily on the first ballot. The NEC gave him more votes than anybody else when choosing the three finalists. Kikwete's majority in the Party Congress was overwhelming: he received 1,072 votes to Salim's 476 and Mwandosya's 122.

Electoral Strategizing and Ticket Balancing

4. (C) The party's choice of Kikwete seems to be popular with the general public. While many of the Embassy's government contacts favored Salim, and other also-rans, Kikwete swept a highly unscientific sample of Embassy FSN staff, Tanzanian friends, and Party Congress participants. Some interlocutors said noisy cheers broke out among friends and neighbors who had gathered around their televisions to hear the nomination announcement. CCM dominance on the mainland is so strong, that it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which the party's nominee could lose the general election on October 30. Kikwete is virtually guaranteed to become Tanzania's fourth president since independence.

5. (U) Kikwete's nomination broke with the informal tradition of alternating the Presidency between Mainland Christians and Zanzibari Muslims. Although the tradition was never a constitutional requirement, Zanzibari party stalwarts may be put out about losing their "turn." The party mollified Zanzibar somewhat by nominating Vice President Shein, who hails from Zanzibar's Pemba Island, to be Kikwete's running mate. Interestingly, the tradition of alternating Christian

with Muslim remains intact: Kikwete is a practicing Muslim, although he is considered moderate in his religious views.

Kikwete's Biographical Notes

16. (C) Kikwete represents the "young Turk" segment of the CCM party. He is popular, politically adroit, charismatic and very ambitious. In socially conservative Tanzania, however, Kikwete's relative youth - he is 55 - has worked against him. So has his playboy reputation. As the party has increasingly emphasized experience and education, Kikwete has a built an impressive resume. Since 1995, Kikwete has been Foreign Minister and also the MP for Chalinze Constituency. Previous government positions include Minister for Finance (1994-95), and Deputy Minister, then Minister for Energy, Minerals and Water (1990-94.) For the twenty years before his government service, Kikwete served in various positions in the CCM party, and in its predecessor party, TANU.

17. (U) Kikwete comes from the small town of Msogo, on the coast near Bagamoyo. He has a BA in economics from the University of Dar es Salaam.

18. (C) An able politician, Kikwete is a somewhat unenthusiastic administrator. On Embassy row, his Foreign Ministry has a reputation for being understaffed and minimally responsive. Kikwete himself is personable, and conveys the impression that he will at least consider the views of foreign diplomats. Kikwete has signaled that he might discuss signing an Article 98 agreement with the US; the current President Benjamin Mkapa has firmly closed the door on any agreement for the remainder of his Presidency. For years, observers of the Great Lakes conflicts have considered Kikwete to be virulently pro-Hutu. Rumors that he was facilitating arms transfers to Burundian Hutu rebels persisted, but have never been substantiated. Kikwete's marriage to a cousin of former Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana may have fueled these rumors, which are now fading as the Burundi conflict winds down.

19. (u) Please see Embassy Dar es Salaam's SPRNet site for a complete update and background on the Tanzanian elections.

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